

REMARKS

Applicant has received and reviewed the Official Action dated 06 April 2007 (hereinafter, the “Action”). In the Action, the Office rejected claims 1-7, 9-14, and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,200,995 to Gaukel et al. (hereinafter, “Gaukel”), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,134,310 to Swan et al. (hereinafter, “Swan”). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections. Applicant has canceled claims 22-24 without prejudice, thereby rendering the rejection of those claims moot.

Claims 1-7 and 9-10

Turning first to **independent claim 1**, without conceding the propriety of the stated rejection and solely to advance the prosecution of this application, Applicant has revised claim 1 to clarify further features of the method. For convenience, Applicant reproduces here part of the revisions to claim 1:

A method for blocking at least one outgoing communication from a calling party to a calling line selected by the calling party in connection with a parental control feature offered to subscribers as an outgoing call blocking service, said calling party having a calling line identification number, said method comprising:

enabling the subscriber to select special feature codes and request that outgoing communications that relate to the special feature codes, and that originate from the calling line identification number, be blocked, wherein special feature codes are received by an automated system that recognizes oral commands and alphanumeric input;

Applicant submits that the revisions to claim 1 are fully supported under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 1st paragraph, by the originally-filed specification, at least by page 17 lines 5-11 and page 9, line 23 through page 15, line 30, thereof. No new matter has been added.

Gaukel generally pertains to an outgoing call restriction circuit which prevents a telephone or a plurality of telephones from making unauthorized or restricted calls. (Abstract). Swan generally pertains to managing outgoing calls, including activating and deactivating calling services. (Col 10, lines 26-44).

Applicant submits that Gaukel, in combination with Swan, fails to teach that "special feature codes are received by an automated system that recognizes oral commands and alphanumeric input," as recited in claim 1. Instead, Gaukel discloses, "The circuit is programmable from any commercially available touch-tone phone." (Abstract). Gaukel further describes the "programmable" feature in the specification as follows:

If upon detection of the first tone bursts from the '#' subscriber telephone station, microprocessor decodes a code (from the '#' key on a touch tone phone), it looks for another '#' code to follow. If found, the computer decodes the next two digits as a menu selector, whereby a specific programmable option may be programmed (*by touching appropriate touch tone keys on the local phone or a remote phone*) according to a described set of rules. If no second code is detected, the number is treated in the above described manner as a normal number invoking special central office functions, and is subject to inhibiting as normal. The choice of two digits and the use of the '#' sign are arbitrary, and are only used here as a typical means of establishing programming.

(Gaukel, Col. 11, Lines 49-63, emphasis added). One may properly infer that a "touch-tone phone" is necessary because input is received by a system through use of the keys on the phone.

Swan also fails to teach "special feature codes are received by an automated system that recognizes oral commands and alphanumeric input," as recited in claim 1. Swan discloses a voice prompt for use with a touch tone phone as described below:

For example, the PCC 10 may voice prompt for a touch tone digit--"For adults press 1, for kids press 2"--and based on the received DTMF digit, the appropriate recipient for routing of the call is determined. For each routing option, there is a specified within the configuration data the type of alerting.

(Swan, Col. 8, Lines 21-26). Similar to Gaukel, Swan collects inputs from a user through entry onto a keypad on a touch-tone telephone. Therefore, neither Gaukel nor Swan, either alone or in combination (assuming for the sake of argument that they can even be combined as suggested in the Office Action), teaches the recitation of Applicant's claim 1 including, "special feature codes are received by an automated system that recognizes oral commands and alphanumeric input."

Claims 2-7 and 9-10 depend from claim 1 and stand rejected on similar grounds. Accordingly, the above comments directed to claim 1 apply equally to claims 2-7 and 9-10. For sake of brevity, only a portion of the dependant claims are discussed in further detail below.

Applicant's claim 3 recites "wherein the special feature code relates to conference call capabilities." The Action points to Gaukel column 4, lines 8-16 as teaching the recitation of claim 3. The cited portion of Gaukel is presented below.

The invention is universal because it allows the restricted list to contain more than simply entire conventional telephone numbers (e.g., 1-976-555-5555; 455-1777; 1-455-1777; etc.). It also is not limited to simply testing whether the first dialed character is an attempt to use the phone for a long distance or operator call (e.g., "0" or "1"). Still further, it is not limited to restricting only a few undesired area codes such as "800" or "900" numbers, or a few specific prefixes.

Applicant respectfully submits that Gaukel fails to teach or suggest blocking conference call capabilities in the cited portion of Gaukel, or anywhere in Gaukel for that matter. Gaukel's disclosure above including, "it is not restricted to only a few undesirable area codes" does not in any way imply blocking conference calls. The use of such broad and sweeping language cannot be used as a basis for generally rejecting all features of a call blocking service. Additional support in the detailed description section of Gaukel's specification does not further define this language to include conference calling.

In addition, blocking conference calls as recited by Applicant is unlike blocking a 1-900 call as taught by Gaukel because a conference call is not limited to specific number types (e.g., 1-900), but may include any number, even a local number. Therefore, applying Gaukel, a caller could create a conference call between any numbers that were not on an unauthorized list. Therefore, Gaukel fails to teach or suggest “wherein the special feature code relates to conference call capabilities” as recited by Applicant’s claim 3.

Based at least on the foregoing bases, Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the §103 rejections of claims 2-7 and 9-10.

Claims 11-14

Turning now to **independent claim 11**, Applicant reproduces here a portion of claim 11:

A method of activating an outgoing call blocking service provided as a parental control feature, the method comprising:

- receiving, from a calling line at a central office associated with the calling line, a predetermined access code to the outgoing call blocking service;

- prompting a subscriber to the outgoing call blocking service to provide data concerning outgoing calls to be blocked, wherein the subscriber is prompted to use oral commands to provide data;

- receiving the orally-provided data and converting the orally-provided data to alphanumeric data;

- storing said alphanumeric data in a data store associated with the outgoing call blocking service; activating the outgoing call blocking service at one of a pre-set time and a pre-set day;

- enabling the subscriber to prohibit outgoing long-distance calls from being placed from the calling line;

- enabling the subscriber to prohibit outgoing calls to at least one specified area code;

- enabling the subscriber to prohibit outgoing calls to at least one specified telephone number;

- enabling the subscriber to prohibit calls that relate to special feature codes from being placed from the calling line, wherein at least one of the special features is a star feature code that relates to *conference calling capabilities*;

Turning to the cited art, the Action relies on Gaukel as teaching “conference calling capabilities”, as recited in claim 11. As discussed with respect to claim 3 above, the cited portion of Gaukel fails to teach blocking conference call capabilities.

In addition, Applicant submits that Gaukel, in combination with Swan (again assuming they can even be combined), fails to teach “receiving the orally-provided data and converting the orally-provided data to alphanumeric data,” as recited in claim 11. Accordingly, claim 11 is allowable for reasons similar to those presented above regarding claim 1. Therefore, Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejections of claim 11.

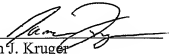
Claims 12-14 depend from claim 11 and stand rejected on similar grounds. Claims 12-14 depend from claim 11 and are allowable by virtue of this dependency, as well as for the additional feature that each recites.

Conclusion

Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the §103 rejections of claims 1-7 and 9-14. If any issue remains unresolved that would prevent favorable action on this case, the Office is requested to contact the undersigned to resolve the issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: July 5, 2007

By: 
Damon J. Kruger
Lee & Hayes, PLLC
Reg. No. 60,400
(206) 315-7918